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SUBJECT: OSCE WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS: SEPTEMBER 8 - 11, 2009

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Carol Fuller for Reasons 1.4(B)&(D)

Freedom Representative Replacement Before 2010

¶11. (SBU) At the weekly U.S.-CiO meeting September 8, Greek PermRep Marinaki said she intends during the Greek Chairmanship to complete the process for replacing OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM) Miklos Haraszti whose term expires in March 2009. Marinaki said the announcement for the position will come out next week, and that the selection process would be "open and transparent", including a session where each candidate will give a presentation and answer questions by interested participating states. Marinaki said she said she did not expect objections from the incoming Kazakh chairmanship to this timeline. This appointment, while based upon the recommendation of the CiO, will require consensus PC or MC decision.

EC to Invite OSCE as Observer to EU Eastern Partners Meetings

¶12. (SBU) In the Sept 8 U.S.-CiO meeting, Greek PermRep Marinaki noted that the EC plans to invite the OSCE as an observer to upcoming EU Eastern Partnership meetings on October 7 focusing on democratization, good governance, and rule of law. She said this participation has already been welcomed by all sides. The OSCE will be represented by a member of the Secretariat's Conflict Prevention Center.

Russia Still Cold on Climate Change in the OSCE

¶13. (SBU) On September 2 a member of the Russian delegation who handles 2nd dimension issues told Poloff that Moscow had decided not to send representatives from its OSCE delegation or from Moscow to the CiO-sponsored conference on the security implications of climate change, to be hosted by Romania October 5-6. He said someone from the Russian Embassy in Bucharest would attend the conference, but noted

Moscow viewed the event as a "waste of time." He also said Moscow still considered climate change, including its potential security implications, an area where OSCE involvement would add no value. A representative of the Greek delegation told us earlier this summer that they would not bother to attempt negotiating a Ministerial decision on the security implications of climate change if Russia expressed the same strong opposition they did in 2008, which likely means this potential Ministerial decision is already off the table for this year.

EU Shares Positive Views of First Corfu Process Meeting

¶4. (SBU) At the weekly U.S.-EU Troika meeting September 9, Sweden/EU Presidency PermRep Bard-BringQus said EU impressions of the first Corfu Process meeting were generally positive, adding that it had reaffirmed the importance of OSCE commitments and the potential benefits of full implementation. She was not surprised by Russia's elaboration of another parallel track alongside the Corfu Process leading to a European security treaty; given that it was a proposal from Medvedev, the Russian delegation had to raise it to save face. The European Commission praised SwedenQ's formulation of the "OSCE," meaning maintaining not only the commitments of the Helsinki Final Act, but also all the acquis (Istanbul, Copenhagen, etc.).

Kazakhs, Concept of a "Wise Persons Group" on Tolerance

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¶5. (SBU) In a September 8 meeting with Poloffs, Kazakh Deputy Suleimenov presented a non-paper proposing the establishment of a Wise Persons Group to promote tolerance in the OSCE region during the upcoming Kazakh Chairmanship. According to the proposal, the CiO would determine the activities and monthly two-day meetings of the group, which would lead to the adoption of a program of action to facilitate interethnic and interfaith concord. Suggested candidates include persons with HD experience from various participating States. The appointment of the 7-10 member group would further emphasize the KazakhsQ, focus on tolerance, along with their planned tolerance conference in September or October 2010. The Kazakhs continue to seek our input on both proposals.

Kazakhstan Seeks New Asian Partners for OSCE

¶6. (C) At a meeting with Poloffs on September 8, Kazakh DCM Usen Suleimenov stated that Kazakhstan is interested in using its special relationship with a number of Asian countries to bring them into the OSCE fold as new Partners for Cooperation. In particular, Kazakhstan thinks that China, Singapore, Pakistan, and India would be good candidates for OSCE partnership. Suleimenov noted that Russia has indicated that it would not oppose partnership for Pakistan, should that country decide to formally apply; Russian views on the other potential candidates are unknown. According to Secretariat officials, with the exception of China, none of the above countries has ever expressed interest in joining the partnership. In fact, India has reportedly blocked cooperation between the OSCE and the ASEAN Regional Forum, rebuffing the OSCE as a model for Asian political development.

OMIK HoM Almhofer on Kosovo Elections, Direction of OMIK

¶7. (C) In a September 9 meeting with CDA Fuller, OSCE Mission in Kosovo (OMIK) Head of Mission Werner Almhofer described feeling significant pressure since taking up his post in October 2008 due to U.S. concerns about the mission's status neutrality blurring into "status negativity." He believes this perception is changing, and pointed to constructive engagement with the CEC on elections capacity building as indicative of the mission's efforts. He said there was encouraging progress on elections preparation,

but uncertainty over Serb participation in elections, and felt Pristina could do much more with economic and infrastructure assistance to woo Serb municipalities. CDA Fuller urged him to look for strategic reductions, and Almhofer said he planned for a 17% reduction in 2010, with likely decreases in 2011 as well. He described Belgrade's proposals for reception centers as not clearly within the mission's mandate, but said a full OMIK feasibility report to come out in late September would likely leave a window open for something effort - which he expected to be picked up ultimately not by OMIK but maybe by the UN or other IOs/NGOs.

OMIK HoM Reports to the Permanent Council

¶8. (SBU) On September 10 OMIK HoM Almhofer delivered the second of OMIK's mandated twice-yearly reports to the PC. He described explicitly OMIK's prominent role in preparing the CEC for elections, but emphasized there was no executive or observation role. He stressed the mission's capacity building activities more than in recent reports. He said

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that ten years into its existence, the mission was undergoing serious self-evaluation in order to prioritize, focus and be more effective, with reductions in store next year not only on staffing and operations costs but to programmatic areas that have delivered sustainable results. The EU statement highlighted, with roughly equal importance, OMIK's human rights monitoring and its institution/civil society capacity building efforts. The RF delivered a strident, critical statement saying the security situation is fragile and the most serious threat to stability in the region, and calling on OMIK to stick to status neutrality and a focus on ensuring respect for minority community rights and helping refugee and IDP returns as dictated by UNSCR 1244. Japan (a partner state) made a statement highlighting Japanese contributions to the Kosovo Judicial Institute and Kosovo's public service broadcaster RTK. Serbia's statement pledged continued cooperation on turning Kosovo into a peaceful, multi-ethnic society, and called on the mission to step up calling out human rights violations and the publishing of thematic reports highlighting institutional failings, such as a recent report on the sale of Kosovo Serb property by third parties using fraudulent documents.

Serbia, Russia Want OMIK Reception Centers in 2010 Budget

¶9. (C) According to conversations with members of their delegations, Serbia and Russia plan to try and insert Serbia's proposed project for establishing eight reception centers to provide community and social services to Kosovo Serbs and other non-Albanians into OMIK's 2010 budget. In a September 9 conversation the OSCE Secretary General de Brichambaut told poloff he thought the project was clearly not within OMIK's mandate, but that the question was how to help Serbian Ambassador Beham, who is heavily invested in this proposal due to her personal efforts and pressure from Belgrade, find a graceful way out. In a potentially related issue, a member of the RF delegation told poloff that the RF had no plans to raise objections to OMIK assistance to the Kosovo CEC. While the RF doesn't consider it a status neutral activity they are "closing their eyes" to it with the understanding that flawed and contested elections could be dangerously destabilizing.

Mediterranean Conference to Focus on Conflict Prevention, Migration

¶10. (SBU) After lengthy discussions on the substance and possible location of the meeting, the agenda for the OSCEQ's annual Mediterranean Partners Conference was finally adopted by the Permanent Council on September 10. The Conference, which will be held in Cairo on December 14 and 15, will focus on best practices in conflict prevention and resolution and the impact of the current economic crisis on migration in the

wider OSCE area. Participants are also likely to discuss the controversial issue of whether to bring Palestine in as a Partner for Cooperation.

UK Opens Fall Round of the FSC

¶11. (SBU) The fall round of the OSCE's Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC) opened on September 9 with a presentation by a British FCO official on the strategic relevance of FSC issues in the global security context. Meanwhile, the USDel drew attention to the draft UNSCR 1540 Best Practice Guide, which is expected to receive the initial consensus it needs in a FSC working group as soon as September 16. Belarus

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provided information on its upcoming combined Belarus-Russia-Kazakhstan exercise "West-2009."

Positions Unchanged as JCG Opens Fall Round:

¶12. (SBU) During the opening session of the Fall round of the Joint Consultative Commission (JCG) on September 8, USDel underscored the U.S. commitment to CFE, noted that Russia's "suspension" left an ominous gap in CFE's unique transparency and predictability, observed that Russia had also given indications of the value it places on the treaty, and called for efforts to sustain the core functions of the JCG. In reply, Russia claimed that it was obviously more committed to A/CFE than the U.S., as Russia had already ratified the adapted treaty. Germany and the U.S. criticized Russia for refusing CFE inspections in August and received statements of support from nine countries. The Chair announced the cancellation of the September 22 JCG due to a scheduled OSCE workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW).

Countering Terrorism Financing Workshop

¶13. (U) On September 11, the OSCE hosted a conference, underwritten in part by the U.S., on preventing the abuse of non-profit organizations to finance terrorism, bringing together more than 150 experts from governments, international organization and civil society. Participants discussed the current state of the international framework, with a particular focus on the Financial Action Task Force recommendations under the aegis of the UN, government oversight of the non-profit sector, methods and successes in self-regulation and building governance capacity in the non-profit sector. A State (EEB) representative made a presentation on "Protecting Charities and non-profits from Terrorist Abuse and Exploitation."

FULLER